

# Canyon Area Day Hikes

National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
  
Yellowstone National Park




## Welcome to the Canyon Area

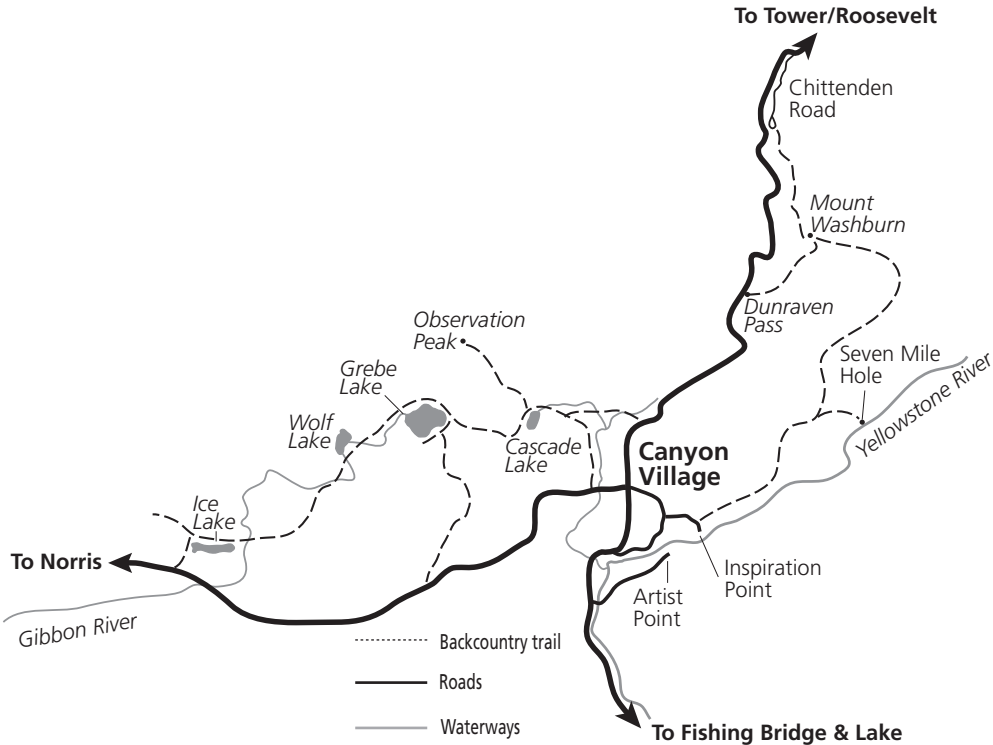
Numerous trails suitable for short or extended hikes into Yellowstone’s backcountry begin in the Canyon area. This guide introduces you to seven selected by the interpretive rangers. Always carry rain gear, extra food and water, and other emergency equipment when venturing into the backcountry. Be sure to obtain current trail condition and bear activity information at the Canyon Visitor Education Center.

### Cautions

**Hydrothermal areas:** The thin ground in these areas breaks easily, and often overlies scalding water. Stay on the trail.

**All Wildlife:** You must stay at least 100 yards (91 m) away from bears and wolves; and at least 25 yards (23 m) away from all other animals—including birds.

 **Bears:** Although your chance of an encounter is low, your safety is not guaranteed. Minimize your risks by making loud noises, shouting, or singing. Hike in groups and use caution where vision is obstructed. Do not hike after dark. Avoid carcasses; bears often defend this source of food.



### Howard Eaton Trail

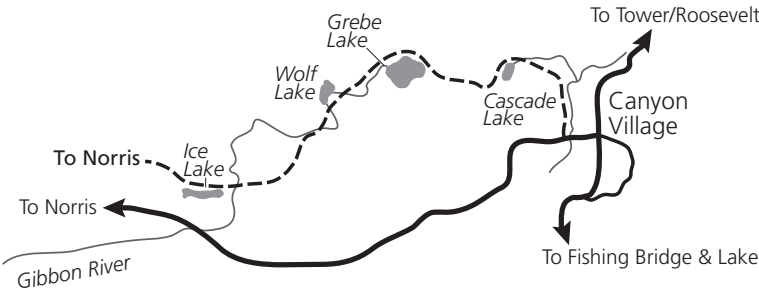
(to Cascade, Grebe, Wolf, and Ice lakes, and Norris)

**Distance, one way:** 2.5–12 miles (4–19.3 km), depending on destination

**Estimated time:** 3–8 hours, depending on destination

**Difficulty:** moderately easy; little vertical rise

**Trailhead:** pullout ¼ mile (0.4 km) west of Canyon Junction on the Norris–Canyon Road



Choose your destination on this trail that passes through forest, meadow, and marsh: Cascade Lake (2½ mi/ 4 km), Grebe Lake (4¼ mi/6.8 km), Wolf Lake (6¼ mi/10 km), Ice Lake (8¼ mi/13.3 km), and Norris Campground (12 mi/19.3 km). The trail can be wet and muddy through July with many biting insects.

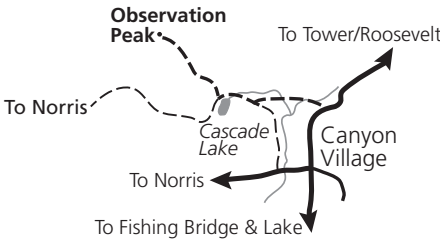
### Observation Peak

**Distance, round trip:** 11 miles (17.7 km)

**Estimated time:** 7 hours

**Difficulty:** strenuous; 1,400 foot (425 m) vertical rise in 3 miles (4.8 km)

**Trailhead:** Cascade Lake Trailhead, 1¼ miles (2 km) north of Canyon Junction on the Grand Loop Road



Hike to a high mountain peak for an outstanding view of the Yellowstone wilderness. Trail passes through open meadows to Cascade Lake (described on back of handout). Beyond the lake, it climbs 1,400 feet in three miles through whitebark pine forest. Past Cascade Lake, no water is available. Not recommended for persons with heart and/or respiratory problems.

Cascade Lake

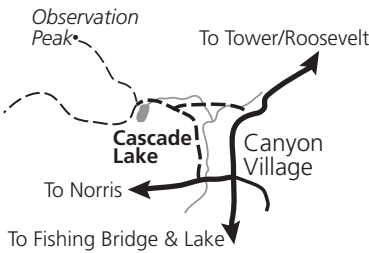
Distance, round trip: 5 miles (8 km)

Estimated time: 3 hours

Difficulty: easy

Trailheads: ¼ mile (0.4 km) west of Canyon Junction on the Norris–Canyon Road or Cascade Lake Trailhead, 1¼ miles (2 km) north of Canyon Junction on the Grand Loop Road

This easy walk allows people with limited time to enjoy open meadows where wildflowers abound and wildlife is often seen. The trail can be wet and muddy through July with many biting insects.



Grebe Lake

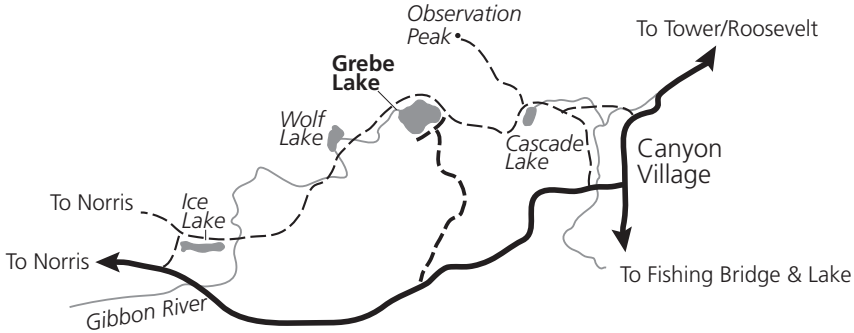
Distance, round trip: 6 miles (9.7 km)

Estimated time: 3–4 hours

Difficulty: moderately easy, little vertical rise

Trailhead: 3½ miles (5.6 km) west of Canyon Junction on the Norris–Canyon Road

A more direct route than the Howard Eaton Trail (described on front side of handout), this trail follows an old fire road through meadows and forest, some of which burned in 1988. At the lake you can connect with the Howard Eaton Trail or return the way you came.



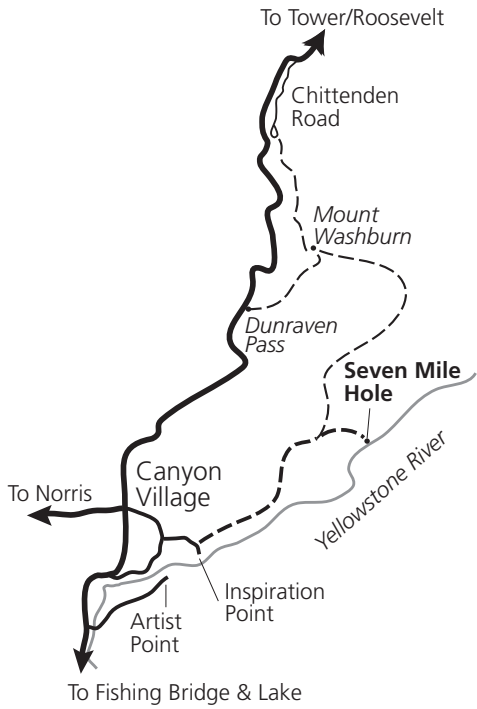
Seven Mile Hole

Distance, round trip: 11 miles (17.7 km)

Estimated time: 6–8 hours

Difficulty: strenuous

Trailhead: Glacial Boulder pullout on the road to Inspiration Point



For the first 1½ miles, you will walk near the canyon rim and have views of Silver Cord Cascade across the canyon. In another half mile, you will join the Washburn Spur Trail; after another 3 miles, turn right onto the trail to Seven Mile Hole, which drops more than 1,000 feet in 1½ miles. Caution: Watch your footing and conserve your energy. Be especially careful where the trail passes both dormant and active hot springs. Stay on the trail.

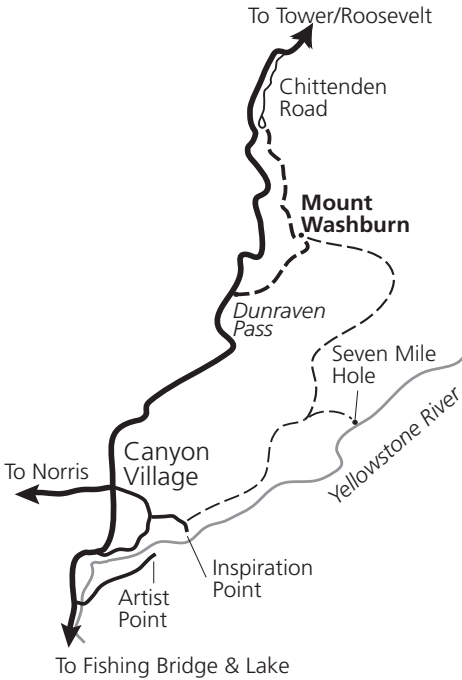
Mt. Washburn

Distance, one way: from Dunraven Pass, 3.1 miles (5 km); from Chittenden Road, 2.5 miles (4 km)

Estimated time: 3–6 hours

Difficulty: strenuous; 1,400 feet (425 m) vertical rise

Trailheads: Dunraven Pass, 4.5 miles (7.2 km) north of Canyon Junction; Chittenden Road, 10.3 miles (16.5 km) north of Canyon Junction.



Starting at either trailhead, you ascend Mt. Washburn on a wide trail with spectacular views. Look for bighorn sheep and wildflowers. Stay on the trail to avoid destroying fragile alpine vegetation. At the top, enjoy the view and interpretive exhibits from inside the shelter at the base of the fire lookout. Caution: Storms are common; bring appropriate gear.

Washburn Spur Trail

Distance, one way: 11–11½ miles (17.7–18.7 km), depending on which trailhead you use.

Estimated time: 6–8 hours

Difficulty: strenuous; 2,000 foot (607 m) elevation change in 2.5 miles (4 km)

Trailheads: Either trailhead for Mt. Washburn

Caution: Trail is in poor condition.



After ascending Mount Washburn, begin the spur trail from the east side of the fire lookout. The trail descends very steeply over rough terrain for 3.7 miles (6 km) to Washburn Hot Springs. Caution: Stay on the trail in this hydro-thermal area. Continue south, passing the turnoff to Seven Mile Hole and ending at the Glacial Boulder pullout on the road to Inspiration Point.

These hikes not recommended for persons with heart and/or respiratory problems.

For more information  
[www.nps.gov/yell](http://www.nps.gov/yell)

Visitor centers have a free hike handout for each major area of the park. A “Day Hike Sampler,” with a hike or two per area, is also available along with several guides for trails throughout the park.